WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A method of treating a human patient suffering from dry eye, wherein prior to treatment said patient has a Schirmer score of less than or equal to seven millimeters per five minutes, said method comprising administering to the patient an ophthalmic composition containing a macrolide compound.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein prior to treatment said patient has a Schirmer score of less than or equal to five millimeters per five minutes.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein said ophthalmic composition contains from about 0.01% to about 0.1% of said macrolide compound.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein said ophthalmic composition contains from about 0.03% to about 0.06% of said macrolide compound.

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein said ophthalmic composition contains about 0.03% of said macrolide compound.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein said macrolide compound is FK506.

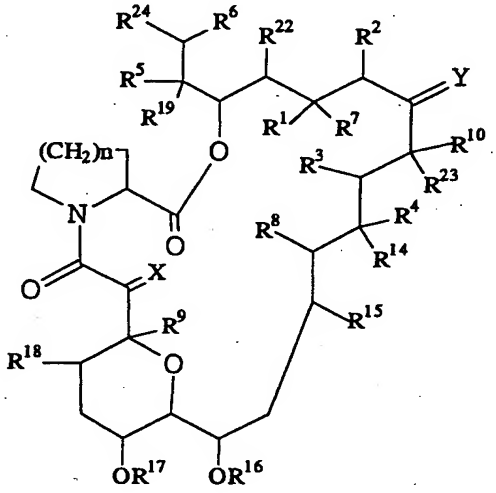
7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said ophthalmic composition is an eye drop.

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein said eye drop further contains polyvinyl alcohol.

9. A method according to claim 7, wherein said eye drop contains about 0.03% of said macrolide compound.

10. A method according to claim 7, wherein said eye drop is administered from about one to about four times per day.

11. A method according to claim 1, wherein said macrolide compound has the following formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(I)

wherein adjacent pairs of R^1 and R^2, R^3 and R^4, and R^5 and R^6 each independently

a) consist of two adjacent hydrogen atoms, wherein R^2 is optionally alkyl, or

b) form another bond optionally between carbon atoms binding with the members of said pairs;

R^7 is hydrogen atom, hydroxy, alkyloxy or protected hydroxy, or may form oxo with R^1;

R^8 and R^9 each independently show hydrogen atom or hydroxy;

R^{10} is hydrogen atom, alkyl, alkyl substituted by one or more hydroxy, alkenyl, alkenyl substituted by one or more hydroxy or alkyl substituted by oxo;

X is oxo, (hydrogen atom, hydroxy), (hydrogen atom, hydrogen atom), or a group of the formula $-CH_2O-$;

Y is oxo, (hydrogen atom, hydroxy), (hydrogen atom, hydrogen atom), or a group of the formula $N-NR^{11}R^{12}$ or $N-OR^{13}$;

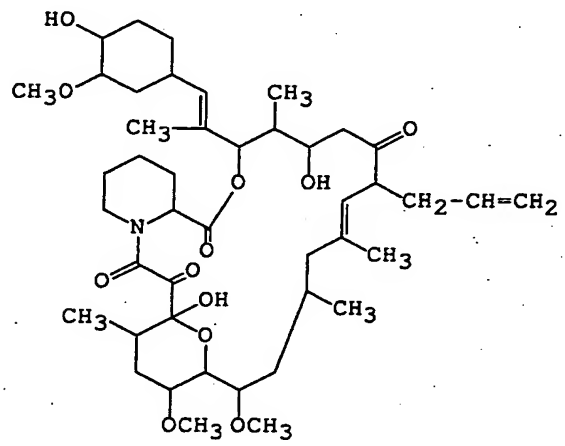
R^{11} and R^{12} each independently show hydrogen atom, alkyl, aryl or tosyl;

R^{13}, R^{14}, R^{15}, R^{16}, R^{17}, R^{18}, R^{19}, R^{22} and R^{23} each independently show hydrogen atom or alkyl;

R^{24} is an optionally substituted ring that may contain one or more hetero atom(s); and

n is 1 or 2.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein said macrolide compound has the following structure:



13. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein prior to treatment said patient also has a superficial punctate keratitis (SPK) score of at least two.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein prior to treatment said patient also has a superficial punctate keratitis (SPK) score of at least three.

15. A method of treating a human patient suffering from dry eye, wherein prior to treatment said patient has a superficial punctate keratitis (SPK) score of at least two, said method comprising administering to the patient an ophthalmic composition containing a macrolide compound.

16. A method of treating a human patient suffering from an ocular surface damage associated with dry eye, wherein prior to treatment the patient has a superficial punctate keratitis (SPK) score of at least two, said method comprising administering to the patient an ophthalmic composition containing a macrolide compound.

17. A method of treating a human patient suffering from an ocular discomfort associated with dry eye, wherein prior to treatment the patient has a Schirmer score of less than or equal to seven millimeters per five minutes, said method comprising administering to the patient an ophthalmic composition containing a macrolide compound.

18. A method of treating a human patient suffering from an ocular discomfort associated with dry eye, wherein prior to treatment the patient has a superficial punctate keratitis (SPK) score of at least two, said method comprising administering to the patient an ophthalmic composition containing a macrolide compound.

19. A method of treating a human patient suffering from an ocular surface damage associated with dry eye, wherein prior to treatment the patient has a Schirmer score of less than or equal to seven millimeters per five minutes, said method comprising administering to the patient an ophthalmic composition containing a macrolide compound.